

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

10

DECISION

TOPIC Cedar Valley Association for Soft Trails (CVASt)- 28E Agreement with DNR
(George Wyth State Park)

Commission approval is requested to give the Director the authority to sign a 28E agreement between the CVASt and the DNR. Cedar Valley Association for Soft Trails (CVASt) is made up of local outdoor enthusiasts that use George Wyth State Park for many recreation activities. Some CVASt members have events in George Wyth during the year that utilize the paved trails and lakes. In Fall 2007, CVASt approached park staff with a proposal to have soft trails in George Wyth that would be used for mountain biking, off road running, and hiking to allow access to more remote areas of the park. "Soft trails" primarily use existing terrain and ground cover and are located and used in a manner that does not induce surface erosion.

George Wyth State Park and the Cedar Valley have an extensive hard-surfaced trail system and CVASt wants to expand on it by creating more soft trails. Creating these trails would bring more visitors to George Wyth State Park. It will allow for new and different types of events to take place and make it possible to expand on some annual events that already bring hundreds of people to the area over a weekend. Cross country teams are interested in soft trails for their runners as a preferred option over paved trails.

CVASt met with staff and proposed areas of George Wyth for soft trails. Staff informed CVASt of a few concerns such as the blue spotted salamander, potential conflicts with campers, and not having sufficient staff to maintain additional trails. We have since worked with Dr. James Demastes, Biology professor from UNI, and Daryl Howell with the DNR on the locations of the blue spotted salamander in George Wyth. A Sovereign Lands permit has been issued for the expanded trails. Archaeological clearance is in progress.

CVASt has recruited volunteers to work on the trails, including students from Hawkeye Community College and local scout groups. They will follow design guidelines set by the DNR and the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA). Education of trail users will also be a component of the agreement to assure trails users are clearly aware of where to ride and not ride in order to protect areas from washouts, not disturb select habitats, and not interfere with campers at campsites.

Funding to develop and maintain the trails will be raised through CVASt memberships, donations, and grants. Burden on George Wyth State Park's budget will be minimal. Park staff will assist with locating and inspecting the trails. They will also assist with general maintenance as time allows. CVASt received information from the DNR Trails Section on trail design and drafted a 28E Management Agreement similar to the one currently in affect at Summerset State Park.

Kevin Szcodronski, State Parks Bureau Chief
Conservation and Recreation Division
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